

The 1817 Project

Land, Culture, Memory, and Repair

Visualizing the History of the University of Michigan's
Early Land Possessions

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M INCLUSIVE HISTORY PROJECT
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

About

Part of the University of Michigan's Inclusive History Project, **The 1817 Project: Land, Culture, Memory, and Repair** examines a pivotal moment in the university's history—the transfer of land from the Anishinaabeg to the institution through Article XVI of the 1817 Treaty of Fort Meigs. The project involves deep, collaborative research into the university's early history, the complex process of the land transfer, and how this history has been represented, occluded, and contested through institutional memory, Native American student activism, and legal challenges.

Contributing to that effort, this document illustrates how land became a key resource in the institution's early development. **Part 1 (pages 3–10)** provides a historical context for the 1817 land transfer, explaining how the institution formally took possession of the land, mapping its locations in southeastern Michigan, and documenting how the proceeds from its sale were used. **Part 2 (pages 11–26)** shows where the university acquired an additional 45,000 acres of land in Michigan from the federal government and places these landholdings in the context of treaties and settlement in the Michigan Territory.



Plaque on the Ann Arbor central campus commemorating the land transfer from some of the “Ojibwa (Chippewa), Odawa (Ottawa), and Bodewadimi (Potawatomi)” people of Michigan.

Part 1: The Treaty of Fort Meigs Lands

Michigan in 1817

American settlement in the region now known as Michigan began in 1796 with the occupation of Detroit and Mackinac. After the Michigan Territory was established in 1805, the United States signed the 1807 Treaty of Detroit with the Anishinaabeg and Wyandotte, anchoring American authority in southeastern Michigan. The Treaty of Detroit transformed the landscape and geography of Michigan by **extinguishing Indigenous title** and ceding large portions of territory to the United States.

Ceded land became **“public domain land”** — meaning the land was owned by the federal government and available for sale, settlement, or public use. Michigan’s settler population was initially small, with only several thousand people concentrated along the Detroit River. But as treaties were signed, more settlers moved in, buying public land and gradually displacing Indigenous communities.



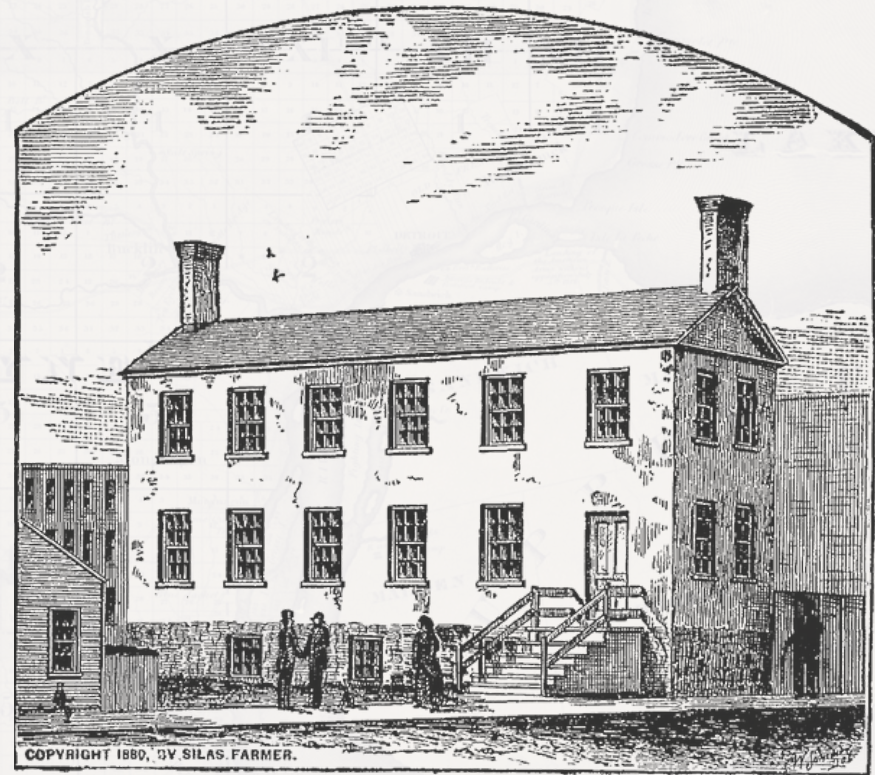
Indigenous villages in Michigan circa 1810.

Image from: Helen Hornbeck Tanner, *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987): 98-99.

The University of Michigan & the Treaty of Fort Meigs

On **August 26, 1817**, the Catholepistemiad, or University of Michigania, the predecessor to the University of Michigan, was established in Detroit, the capital of Michigan Territory. However, the institution did not initially offer university-level classes. Instead, a primary school and “Classical Academy” began operating a few years later out of the institution’s small, two-story building in what is now downtown Detroit, drawing students from the surrounding area.

One month after its establishment, the Catholepistemiad received a “grant” of **three sections of land from the Anishinaabeg** through **Article XVI** of the **1817 Treaty of Fort Meigs**. With few other financial resources, the land grant gave the institution’s early leaders an opportunity to generate funds for its development. When the institution was renamed the University of Michigan in 1821, control of the land grant was vested in a 21-member Board of Trustees. Over the next few years, the Board located or claimed these lands, which eventually totaled **1,870.85 acres**. They then sold the land, using the proceeds primarily to settle institutional debts.

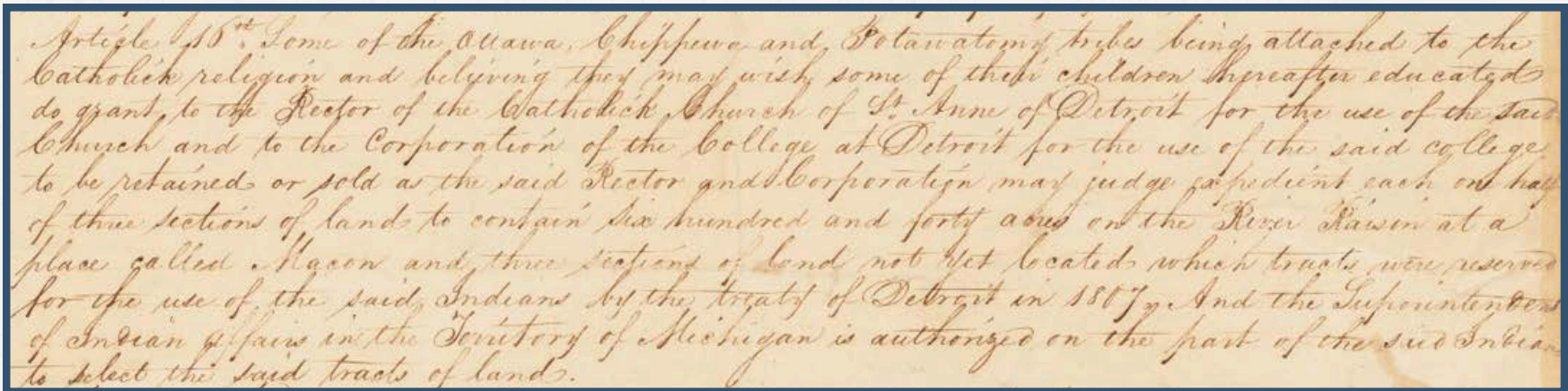


First building of the University of Michigan in Detroit.

Image from: Silas Farmer, *The History of Detroit and Michigan* (Detroit: Silas Farmer & Co, 1884): 730. <https://name.umdl.umich.edu/bad1458.0001.001>.

Article XVI

Article XVI of the 1817 Treaty of Fort Meigs, one of twenty-one articles in a treaty aimed at appropriating Wyandotte land in northwestern Ohio, granted land to two settler institutions in Detroit, including the Catholepistemiad (or University of Michigan) and Sainte Anne de Détroit, Detroit's Catholic church. The meaning of the article and the intent of the land grant have been debated for years and even became the central issue in a 1971 lawsuit against the university. Below is an image of Article XVI from the original treaty document, along with a transcription of the text.

A photograph of a handwritten document, likely a treaty, showing Article XVI. The text is written in cursive and is framed by a black border. The background of the entire page is a faded map of Michigan with various place names and geographical features visible.

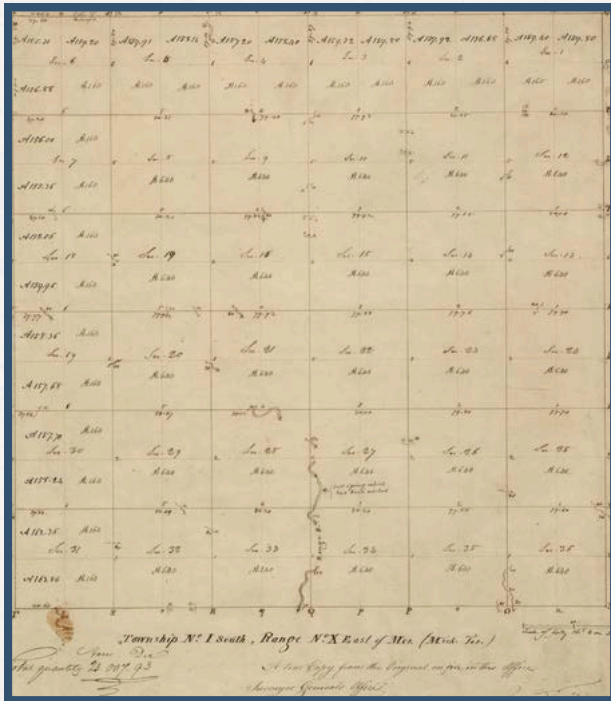
Article 16th. Some of the Ottawa, Chippewa and Potawatomy tribes being attached to the Catholic religion and believing they may wish some of their children hereafter educated do grant, to the Rector of the Catholick Church of St. Anne of Detroit for the use of the said Church and to the Corporation of the College at Detroit for the use of the said college, to be retained or sold as the said Rector and Corporation may judge expedient each one half of three sections of land to contain six hundred and forty acres on the River Raisin at a place called Macon and three sections of land not yet located which tracts were reserved for the use of the said Indians by the treaty of Detroit in 1807. And the Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the Territory of Michigan is authorized on the part of the said Indians to select this said tracts of lands.

Article XVI of the 1817 Treaty of Fort Meigs

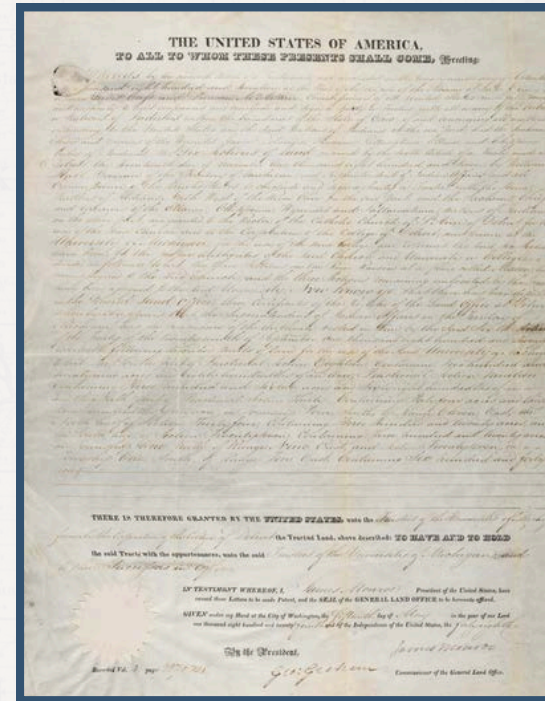
“Article XVI. Some of the Ottawa, Chippewa, and Potawatomy tribes, being attached to the Catholic religion, and believing they may wish some of their children hereafter educated, do grant to the rector of the Catholic church of St. Anne of Detroit, for the use of the said church, and to the corporation of the college at Detroit, for the use of the said college, to be retained or sold, as the said rector and corporation may judge expedient, each, one half of three sections of land, to contain six hundred and forty acres, on the river Raisin, at a place called Macon and three sections of land not yet located, which tracts were reserved, for the use of the said Indians, by the treaty of Detroit, in one thousand eight hundred and seven; and the superintendent of Indian affairs, in the territory of Michigan, is authorized, on the part of the said Indians, to select the said tracts of land.”

Image from: *Treaty of Fort Meigs, 1817*, National Archives. <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/120942221>.

Alchemizing Anishinaabe Land



Plat of Township 1 South, Range 10 East

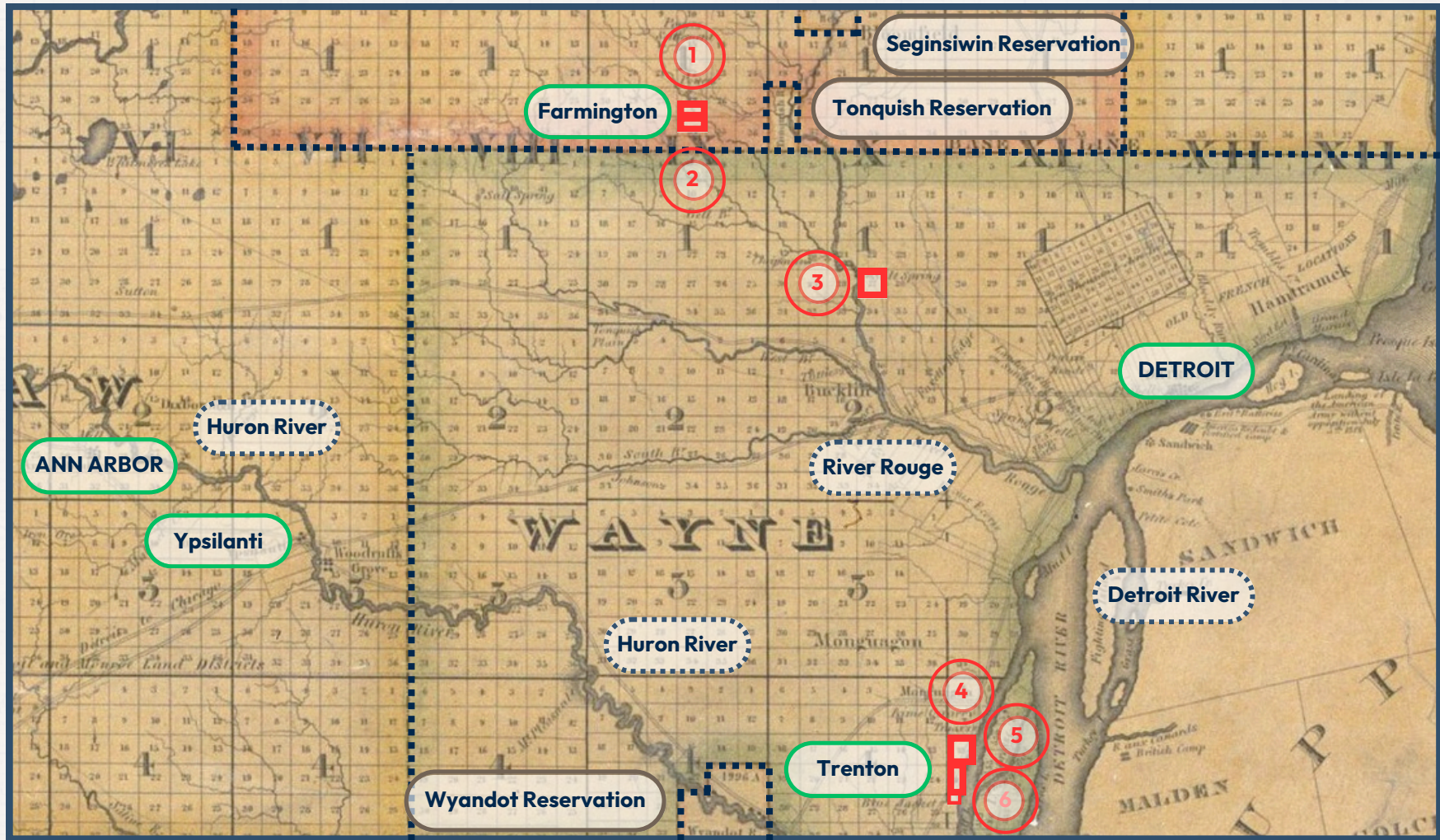


U-M Patent for Treaty of Fort Meigs lands (1824)

The federal government's **Public Land Survey System** made it possible for U-M to realize the Article XVI land grant. After treaties extinguished Indigenous title and transformed ceded land into the American public domain, surveyors measured townships comprising thirty-six, one-square-mile sections, with each section containing 640 acres. Townships and sections were numbered, and plats (maps) produced, allowing settlers and institutions to identify and claim land. U-M's Board of Trustees selected land using plats like the one above, and then applied to the **General Land Office**, a federal agency, to secure ownership. The trustees also asked **Department of the Treasury** officials for permission to locate, subdivide, and sell the land. Both offices approved, issuing U-M the patent above, which conferred formal legal title. Every step in the process of alchemizing Anishinaabe land required federal approvals and oversight.

Left image from: General Land Office Records, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior. Right image from: Board of Regents (University of Michigan) Records, 1817-2016, Bentley Historical Library.

Land Acquired Through the Treaty of Fort Meigs



- ① South half of section 27, Township 1 North, Range 9 East 320 Acres, Farmington, Oakland Co.
- ② North half of section 34, Township 1 North, Range 9 East 320 Acres, Farmington, Oakland Co.
- ③ Entire section 27, Township 1 South, Range 10 East 640 Acres, Detroit, Wayne Co.
- ④ Fractional Section 18, Township 4 South, Range 11 East 229.8 Acres, Trenton, Wayne Co.
- ⑤ Fractional Section 19, Township 4 South, Range 11 East 316.68 Acres, Trenton, Wayne Co.
- ⑥ Fractional Section 30, Township 4 South, Range 11 East 44.37 Acres, Trenton, Wayne Co.

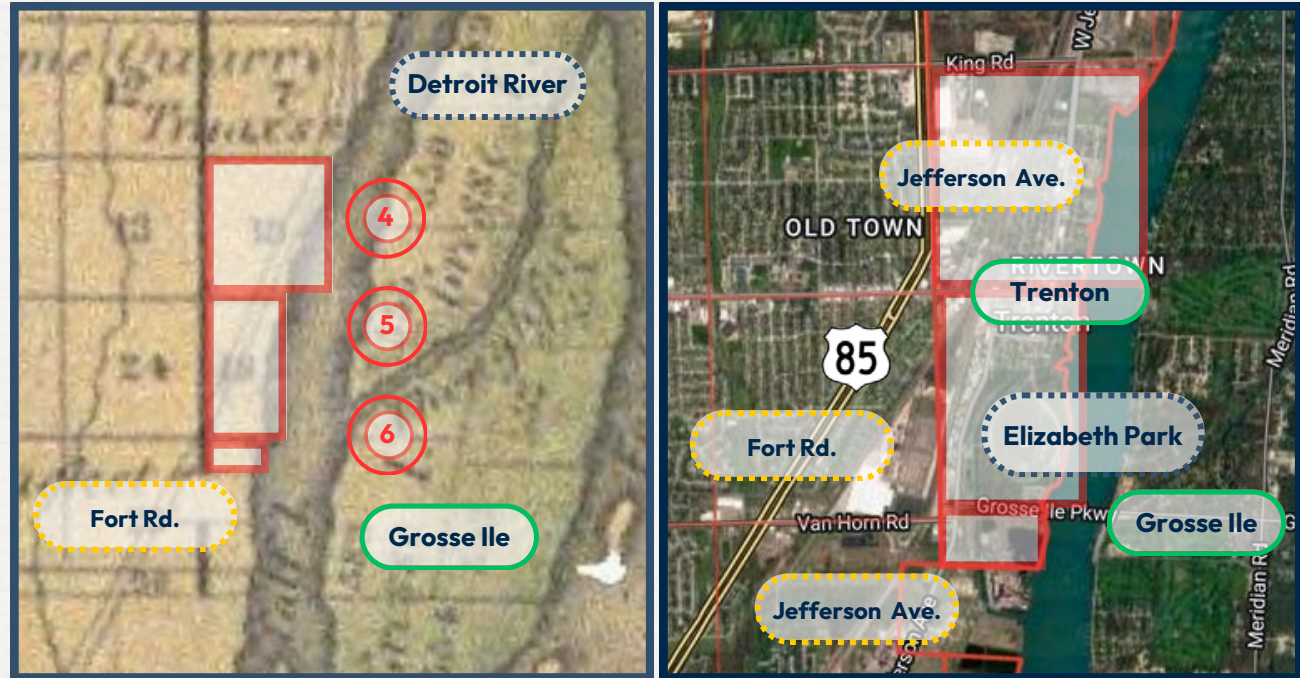
Image from: Orange Risdon, "First Map of Michigan," 1825, University of Michigan Digital Collections. <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/image/image-idx?id=S-SDLPHOTOS-X-374%5DSHS00722>.

Detroit River Lands — Wayne County

Using the Treaty of Fort Meigs, U-M acquired **three fractional sections along the Detroit River**. These sections were valuable due to their location on the river, a crucial transportation route before the advent of highways. The parcels were sold between 1825 and 1831, bringing in **\$3,238.83** for the university.

The proceeds from the sale of these and other Fort Meigs treaty lands were essential to the early development of the institution, providing a much-needed cash infusion to maintain the university's buildings and cover debt payments.

Today, these sections cover much of **downtown Trenton**, Wayne County, Michigan. **Elizabeth Park**, a county-owned recreation site, covers much of fractional section 19. Other areas of these sections are now industrial land, including the former site of DTE's Trenton Channel Power Plant.

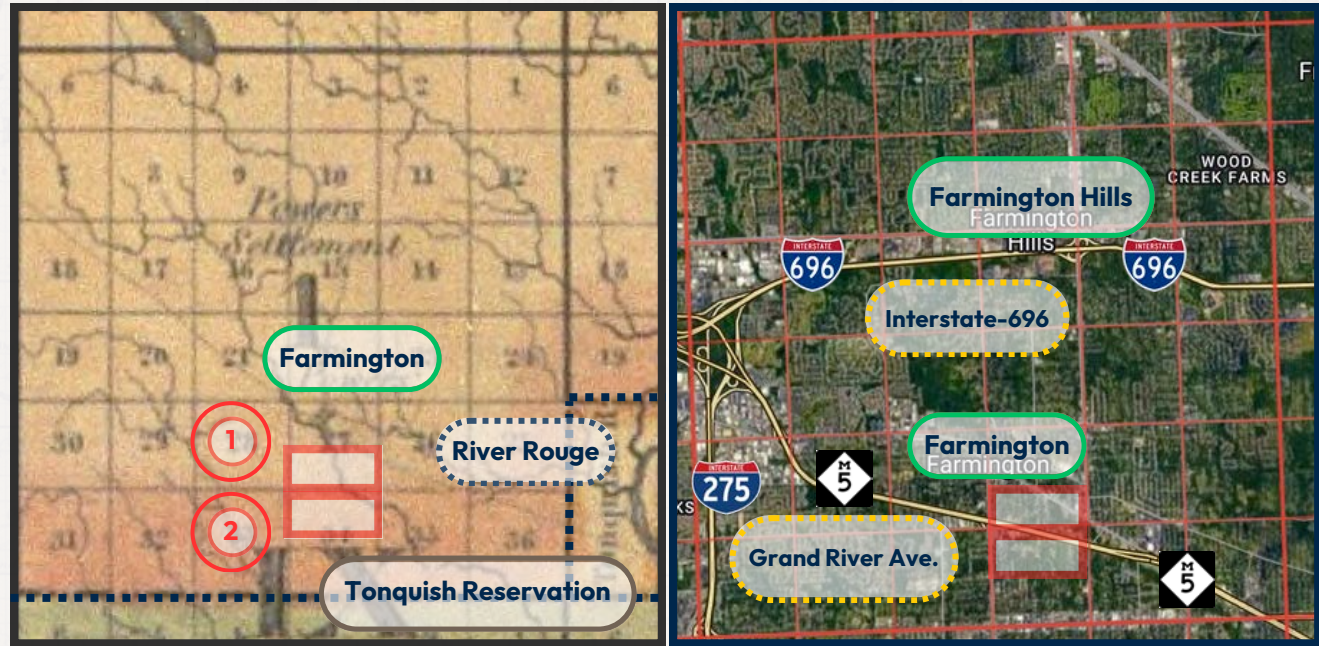


- 4** Fractional Section 18, Township 4 South, Range 11 East 229.8 Acres, Trenton, Wayne Co.
- 5** Fractional Section 19, Township 4 South, Range 11 East 316.68 Acres, Trenton, Wayne Co.
- 6** Fractional Section 30, Township 4 South, Range 11 East 44.37 Acres, Trenton, Wayne Co.

Left image from: Orange Risdon, "First Map of Michigan," 1825, University of Michigan Digital Collections. Right image from: Google Maps. <https://maps.app.goo.gl/BS5ic53FctWQgdy6>.

The Farmington Tract - Oakland County

U-M's **two sections** in Oakland County, comprising a combined **640 acres**, were also valuable. Bisected by tributaries of the Rouge River, an important inland transportation route, and near the emerging settlement of Farmington, these lands were particularly attractive to settlers. A Native American pathway, the "Grand River Trail," crossed the northern half of section 27. U-M's land sat two miles west from Tonquish's village, a Native American Reservation established by the 1807 Treaty of Detroit. The land was sold to settlers between 1828 and 1830, bringing in **\$1,520** that the institution used to settle debts with merchants.



① South half of section 27, Township 1 North, Range 9 East 320 Acres, Farmington, Oakland Co.

② North half of section 34, Township 1 North, Range 9 East 320 Acres, Farmington, Oakland Co.

Today, these sections sit immediately south of downtown **Farmington**, Oakland County, Michigan. **Michigan Highway #5**, also known as **Grand River Avenue**, follows the route of the centuries old "Grand River Trail." Both sections are covered by mixture of residential and commercial zoning.

Left image from: Orange Risdon, "First Map of Michigan," 1825, University of Michigan Digital Collections. Right image from: Google Maps. <https://maps.app.goo.gl/evVJpSzYrDqewxw56>.

River Rouge Lands - Wayne County

Situated on the River Rouge several miles south of the “Farmington Tract,” this **640-acre section** was partially cleared of trees and contained a **salt spring** when acquired by U-M in 1824. Settlers were attracted to this land because it was ready for agriculture, and the River Rouge provided a route to transport crops to Detroit.

U-M began to sell land in this section in 1832 and received at least **\$1,600** in profit from the sales. Funds from sales of this land were used to pay debt or directed into the institutions’ accounts at the Bank of Michigan.

Today, this section sits on the western edge of the City of Detroit. The city-run **Rouge Park Golf Course** covers roughly one-quarter of the section. The River Rouge continues to wind through the western half of the section, as it did when the land was acquired by U-M. Other areas of the section are a mix of residential and industrial zoning.



3 Entire section 27, Township 1 South, Range 10 East 640 Acres, Detroit, Wayne Co.

Left image from: Orange Risdon, “First Map of Michigan,” 1825, University of Michigan Digital Collections. Right image from: Google Maps. <https://maps.app.goo.gl/uo2BPEH69Z25QNV19>.

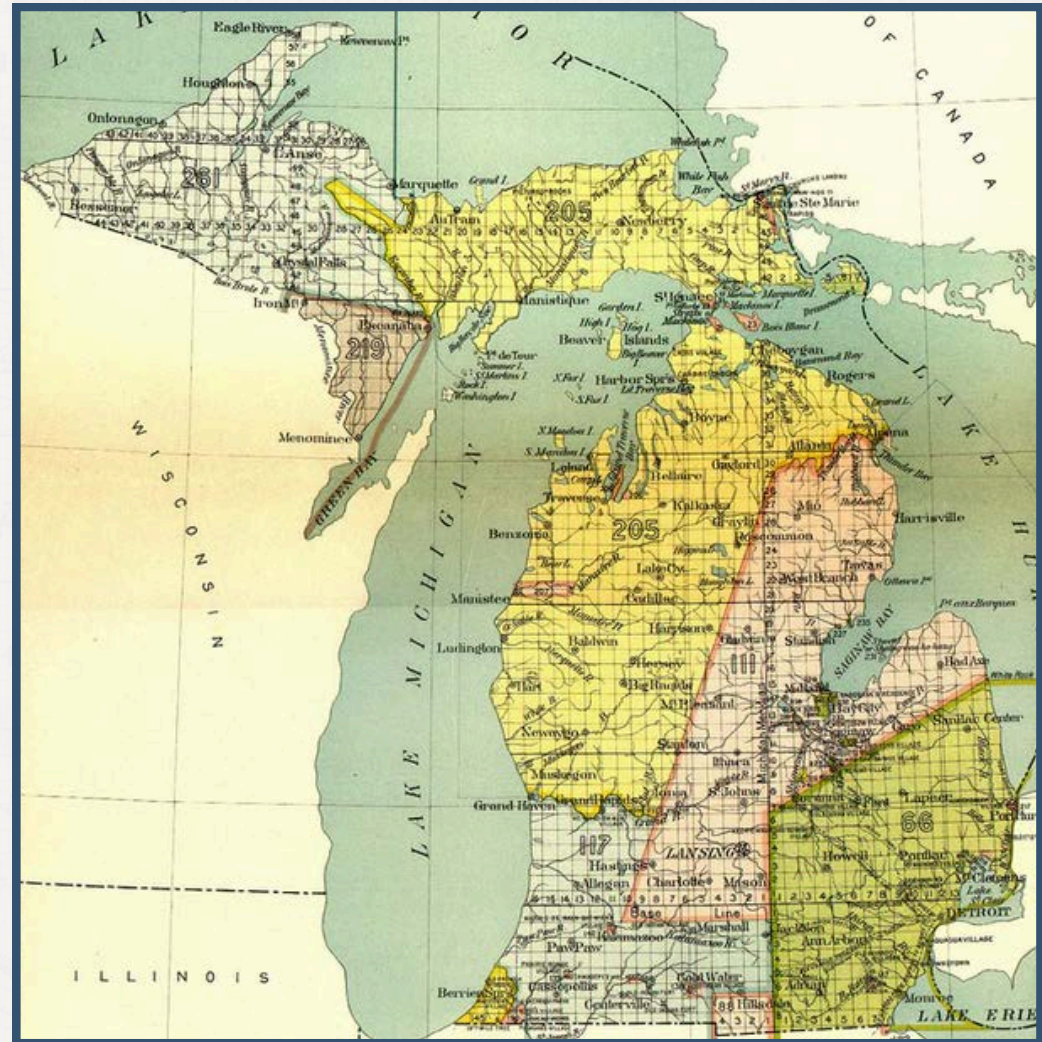
Part 2: Land from the Federal Government

Expanding Settlement

During the 1820s and 1830s, innovations in transportation, including travel by steamships, as well as the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, led tens of thousands of American migrants into Michigan.

Simultaneously, a **series of treaties** with Indigenous nations expanded American territorial claims. These treaties included the 1819 Saginaw Treaty, the 1821 Treaty of Chicago, the 1828 Carey Mission Treaty, the 1836 Treaty of Washington, and the 1842 Treaty of La Pointe. By 1842, virtually all of present-day Michigan had been ceded to the United States.

In the 1830s, many Indigenous people in Michigan were forced to relocate to interior territories such as Oklahoma. However, **many Indigenous communities avoided removal**, preserving portions of their homelands and their cultural traditions. Today, there are twelve federally-recognized tribes in the state.



Treaties and land cessions in Michigan 1807-1842.

Image from: Charles C. Royce, "Michigan 1," Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3701em.gct00002/?sp=29>.

Federal Support for Education

As early as 1785, the federal government recognized the need to establish schools in newly-acquired territories such as Michigan. Lacking sufficient taxes and revenue to fund education, it utilized one of its few available resources—**land**. Several legislative acts aimed to support education, with some proclaiming its importance, while others specifically allocated public domain land to institutions. U-M's Board of Trustees believed that education would drive the growth of the Michigan Territory and swiftly used federal law to acquire land, in addition to what was granted to the institution through the Treaty of Fort Meigs.

“There shall be reserved the lot No. 16, of every township, for the maintenance of public schools, within the said township...”

- Land Ordinance of 1785

“Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged...”

- Article III of the 1787 Northwest Ordinance

“a quantity of land, not exceeding two entire townships, for the use and support of a university within the territory...”

- An Act Concerning a seminary of learning in the territory of Michigan (May 20, 1826)

U-M Holdings by County

In addition to the land U-M acquired through the Treaty of Fort Meigs, the institution secured **44,666.83 acres of public domain land** through federal legislation designed to promote education in newly established territories. The U-M Trustees, including Lewis Cass, who was simultaneously the Governor of the Michigan Territory, secured federal approval to **subdivide** and **make fungible** the two complete townships set aside for the support of universities within the territory. The Trustees also obtained approval to subdivide the Anishinaabe land grant, originally designated as three full sections, into smaller fractional sections.

Subdividing the grants into smaller parcels made U-M's land more attractive to settlers and allowed the university to quickly sell its lands, which were located across southern Michigan. Most sales took place in the 1830s, when settlers and speculators from the East Coast began to arrive in large numbers. U-M took advantage of the "**Michigan Fever**" land rush, securing substantial profits from the sales.



Map showing the division of Michigan into counties. U-M held land within the highlighted counties.

Image from: Michigan County Map, GIS Geography. <https://gisgeography.com/michigan-county-map/>.

Commodifying Land

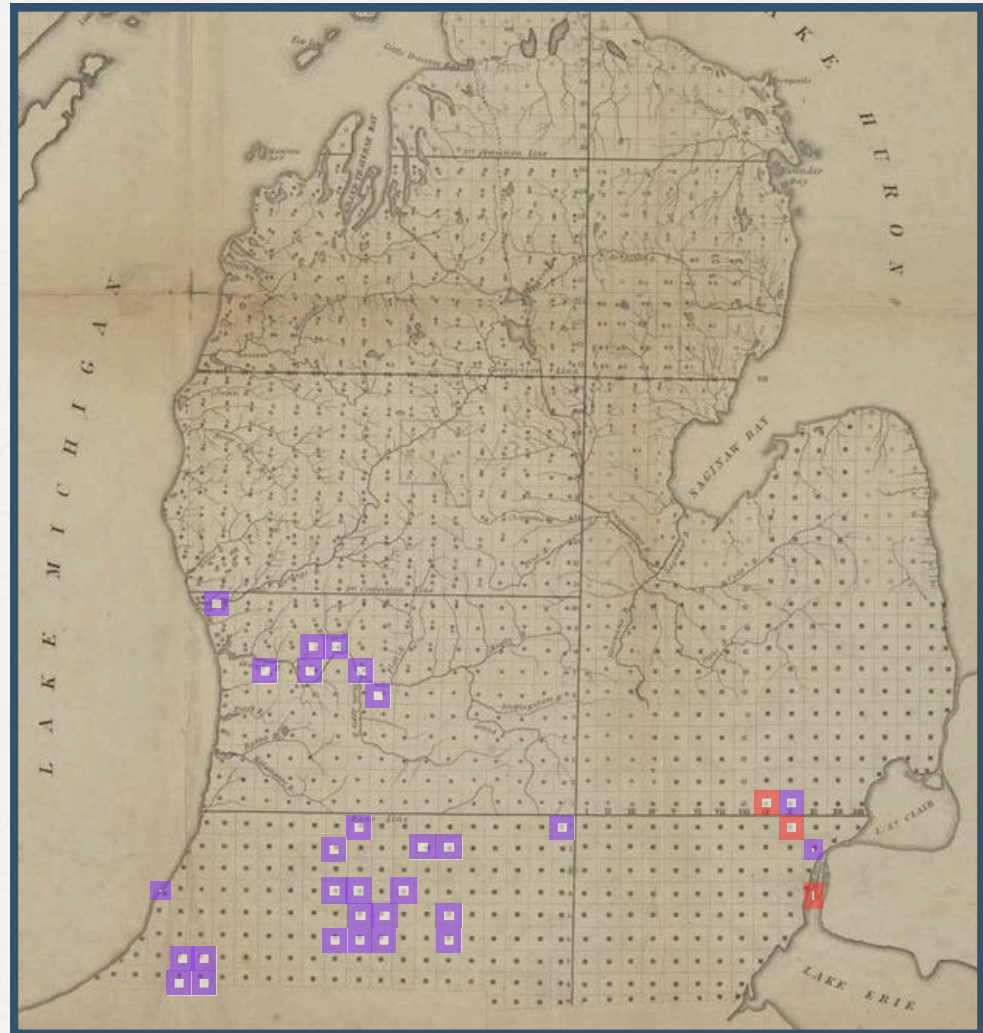
This 1847 sketch of the public surveys in Michigan illustrates the ongoing process of surveying, subdividing, and preparing public domain land for sale. American settlers and government officials viewed land as a commodity, which clashed with Indigenous understandings of their homelands as living landscapes deeply interconnected with spiritual, cultural, and ecological aspects of life.

Each square represents one thirty-six square mile public survey township. U-M held land within the townships indicated in red and purple.

If U-M gained the land from the **Treaty of Fort Meigs**, survey townships are identified by a red square (■).

If land was granted by the federal government as **public domain land**, survey townships are identified by a purple square (■).

The following pages contain maps showing where U-M held land in numerous Michigan counties and one Ohio county, along with details on the acquisition date, land size, and likely reasons for selection.



Michigan divided into public survey townships. U-M held land within the highlighted townships, but never owned a complete, whole township.

Image from: Leander Chapman, "Sketch of the public surveys in Michigan," 1854, New York Public Library Digital Collections. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/67791240-b5c2-0135-92e6-069b02cb814f>.

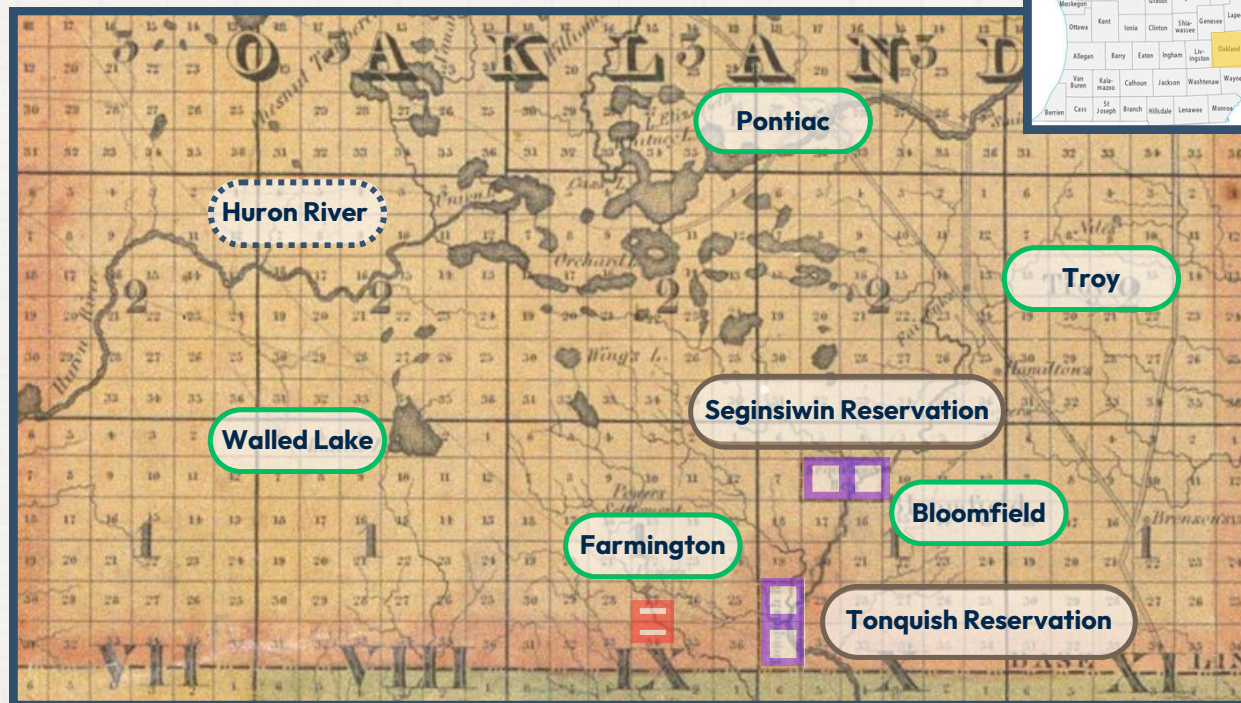
Oakland County

Land Parcels: 6
Acreage: 3,199.48 acres

The parcels U-M acquired through the Treaty of Fort Meigs are indicated with red squares (■).

The parcels U-M acquired from the federal government and later sold are identified with a purple square (■).

Within Oakland County, U-M held two half sections, for a combined 640 acres, near present-day Farmington.



Through the **1827 Treaty of St. Joseph**, the two Native American Reservations indicated on this map—**Seginsiwinn and Tonquish’s Reservations**—were extinguished, meaning Native American rights to the land, including the right to inhabit and utilize resources, ended. The treaty extinguished the reservations to “consolidate some of the dispersed bands of the Potawatamie Tribe in the Territory of Michigan at a point removed ... as far as practicable from the settlements of the Whites.” After the forced removal of the Bodéwadmi to western Michigan, U-M acquired legal title to the former reservation lands, which were desirable because of their proximity to emerging settlements such as Farmington and Pontiac.

Image from: Orange Risdon, “First Map of Michigan,” 1825, University of Michigan Digital Collections.

Kalamazoo County

Land Parcels: 15

Acreage: 9,559.35 acres

U-M acquired several parcels that later formed much of present-day downtown Kalamazoo. Additional landholdings were located in the southern and northern areas of Kalamazoo County, which remain rural and agricultural.

Much of Kalamazoo County was ceded to the United States through the **1821 Chicago Treaty** and the **1827 Treaty of St. Joseph**, which extended U.S. authority across southern Michigan to the Lake Michigan shoreline. Before these treaties, the Bodéwadmi inhabited villages throughout the county. American settlement in region began in 1829.

Here, as in other areas of Michigan recently opened to settlement, U-M strategically acquired land that would be desirable to settler buyers, near to emerging towns and transportation routes.

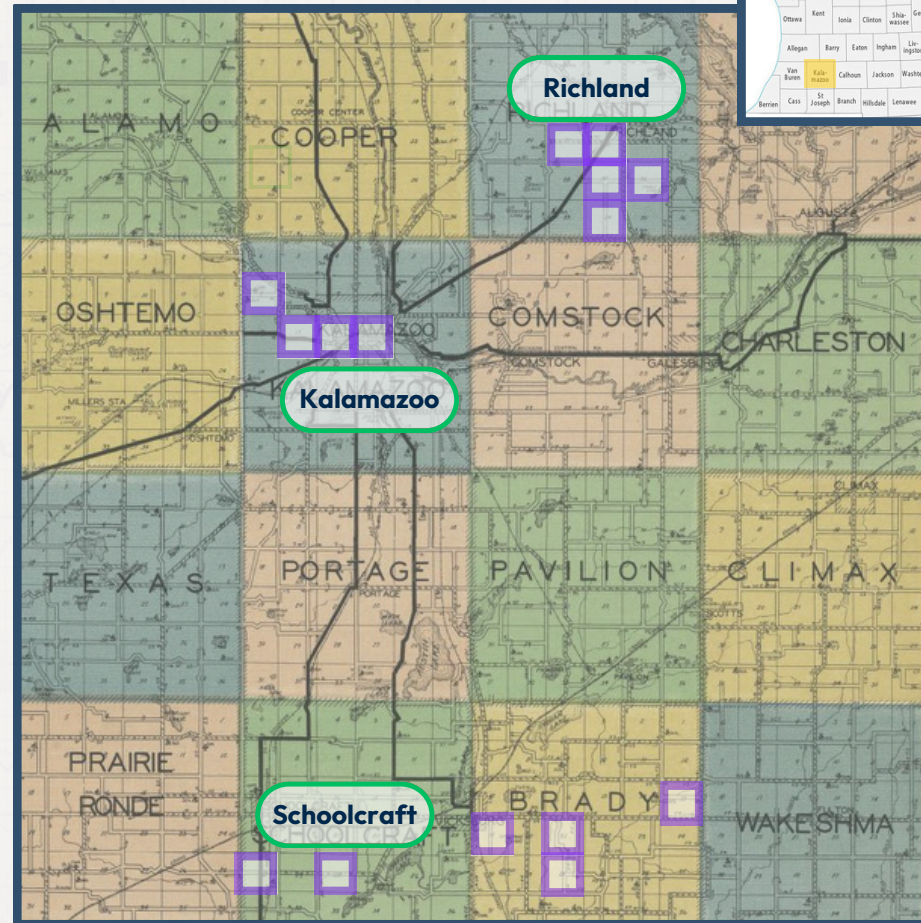


Image from: Glen C. Wheaton, *Plat Book of Kalamazoo County, Michigan*. Rockford, Illinois: Thrift Press, [1928?] <https://lccn.loc.gov/2007626757>.

Berrien County

Land Parcels: 14
Acreage: 7,964.05 acres

In 1837, U-M secured legal title to 14 parcels in Berrien County, which was organized and opened for settlement in 1831. Most of U-M's holdings were near Niles, positioned to benefit from the area's growing settler population that predated U-M's claims.

U-M's lands near Niles had entered the U.S. public domain through the **1821 Treaty of Chicago**. This area is the traditional territory of the Bodéwadmi people, including the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, who maintain a reservation near Niles.

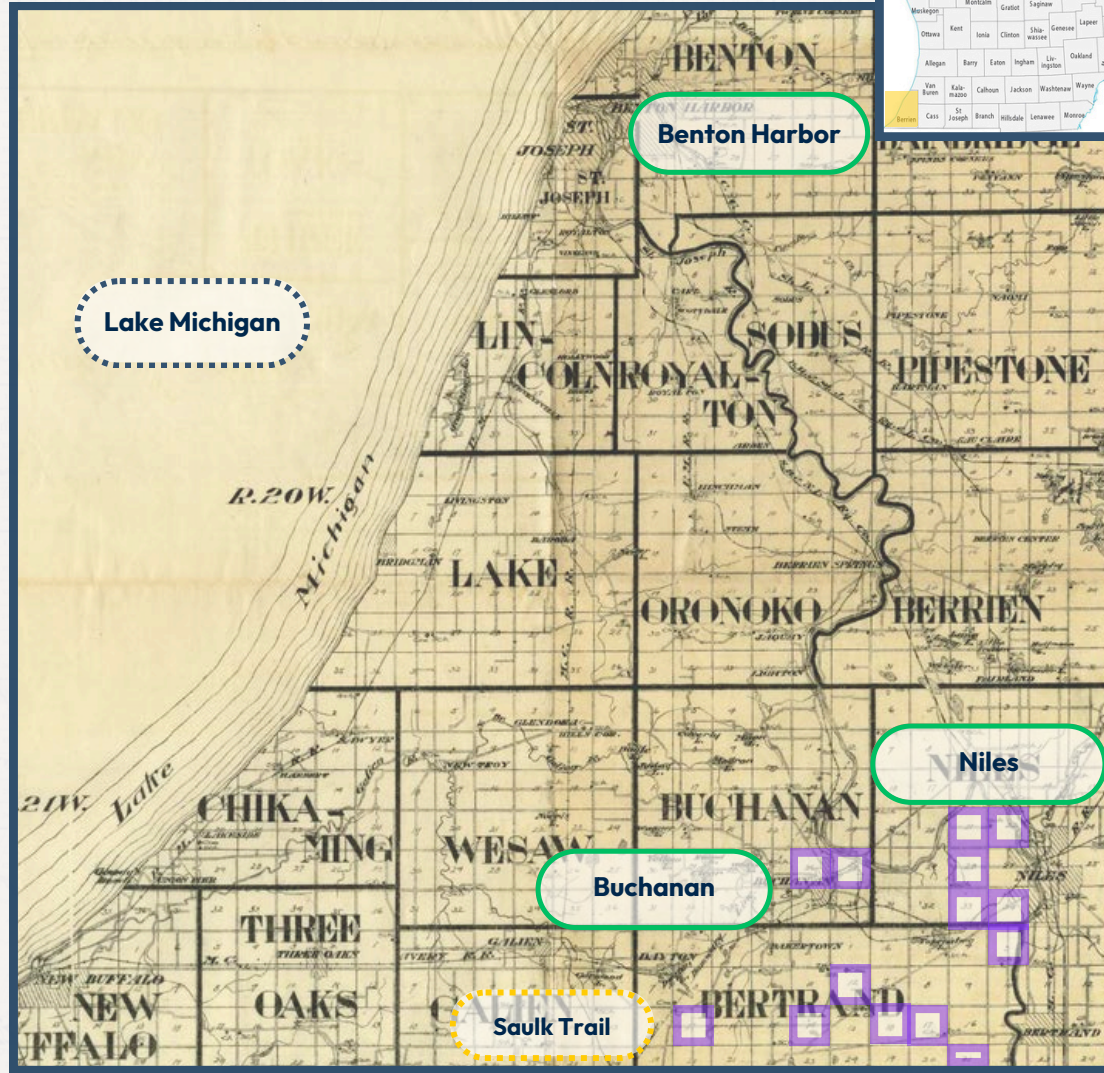


Image from: W.W. Hixon & Co., *Plat Book of Berrien County*, [1920-1929], Michigan State University Libraries Digital Collections. <https://d.lib.msu.edu/maps/1282?page=18>.

St. Joseph County

Land Parcels: 12

Acreage: 7,464.27 acres

U-M's landholdings in St. Joseph County concentrated along the **St. Joseph River**, an important regional transportation route. U-M took possession of these parcels between 1830 and 1833, when settlers were beginning to move west across Michigan.

Before the advent of railroads, rivers were essential to mobility and the transportation of agricultural goods to major population centers. Many of U-M's landholdings in Michigan sat along rivers or emerging road networks. This area entered the U.S. public domain through the **1821 Treaty of Chicago**.

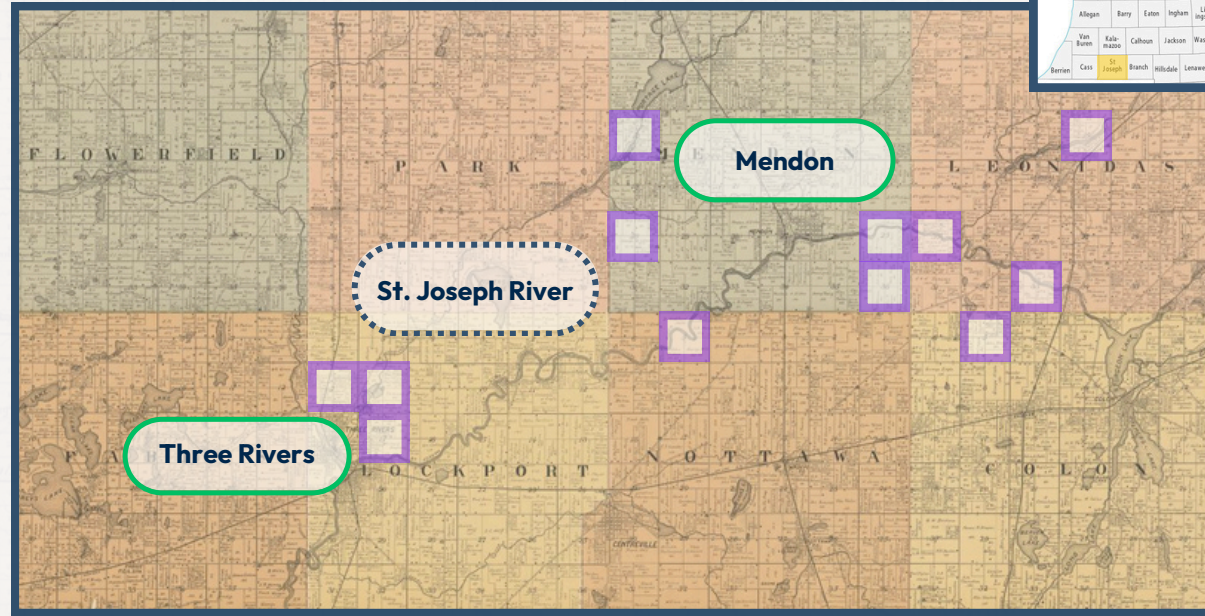


Image from: Home Publishing Company, "Map of St. Joseph County, Michigan," 1897, Library of Congress. <https://lccn.loc.gov/2012593165>.

Jackson County

Land Parcels: 3

Acreage: 1,851.27 acres

U-M's landholdings in Rives Township, Jackson County, encompass what are now agricultural areas. U-M secured these parcels in 1833, one year after the organization of the county. Jackson had been established as a town in 1829, but settlement on the land near U-M's holdings began in earnest in 1834.

U-M's land sat in proximity to the upper branches of the Grand River, which drains into Lake Michigan. Additionally, a **Native American pathway** connected the area to Ann Arbor, which was established in 1824.

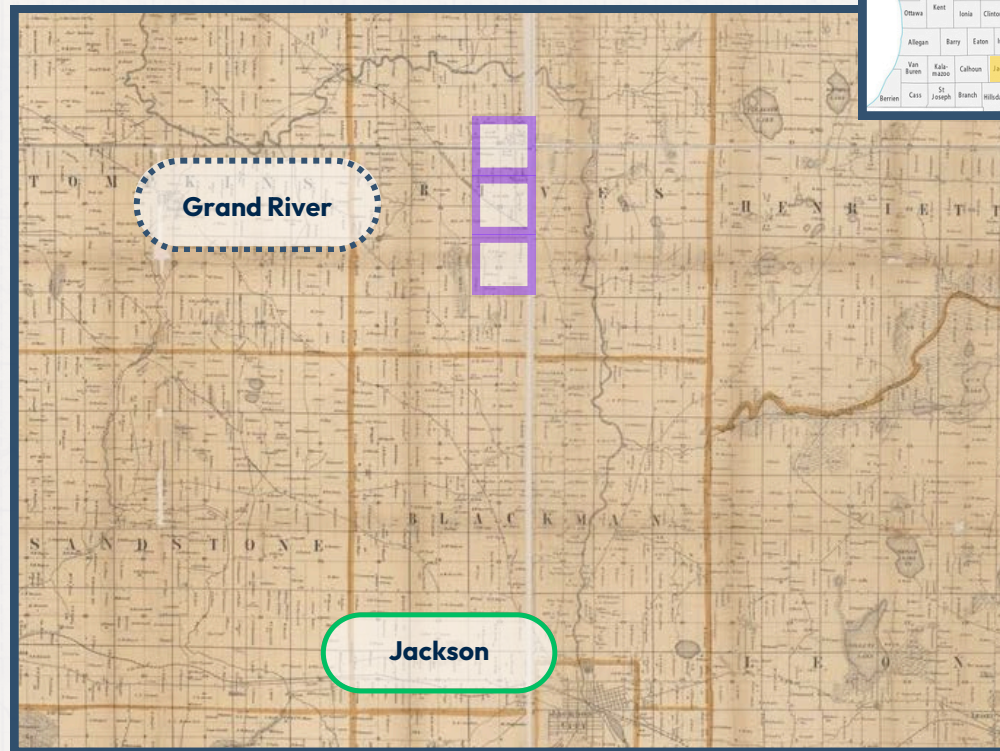


Image from: Jos. M. Alexander, "Map of Jackson County, Michigan," 1858, Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2012593154/>.

Wayne County

Land Parcels: 5 + Academy Lot
Acreage: 1,705.35 acres

In addition to the “**Academy Lot**” in Detroit, where U-M held classes for primary and secondary school students, the institution also held land in southern and western Wayne County. Three parcels in Trenton, which was first settled in 1816, and a complete section in what is now Redford Township were acquired by the university via the Treaty of Fort Meigs. A third parcel, the “**Shipyard Tract,**” on the Rouge River in what is now Dearborn, was acquired from the federal government.

U-M's ownership of these lands, and American settlement more generally, was made possible by treaties that forced the removal of Indigenous people from the Detroit River, a region they had inhabited for centuries. **The 1807 Treaty of Detroit** ceded Wayne County to the United States, confining the area's Anishinaabeg and Wyandotte people to several reservations.

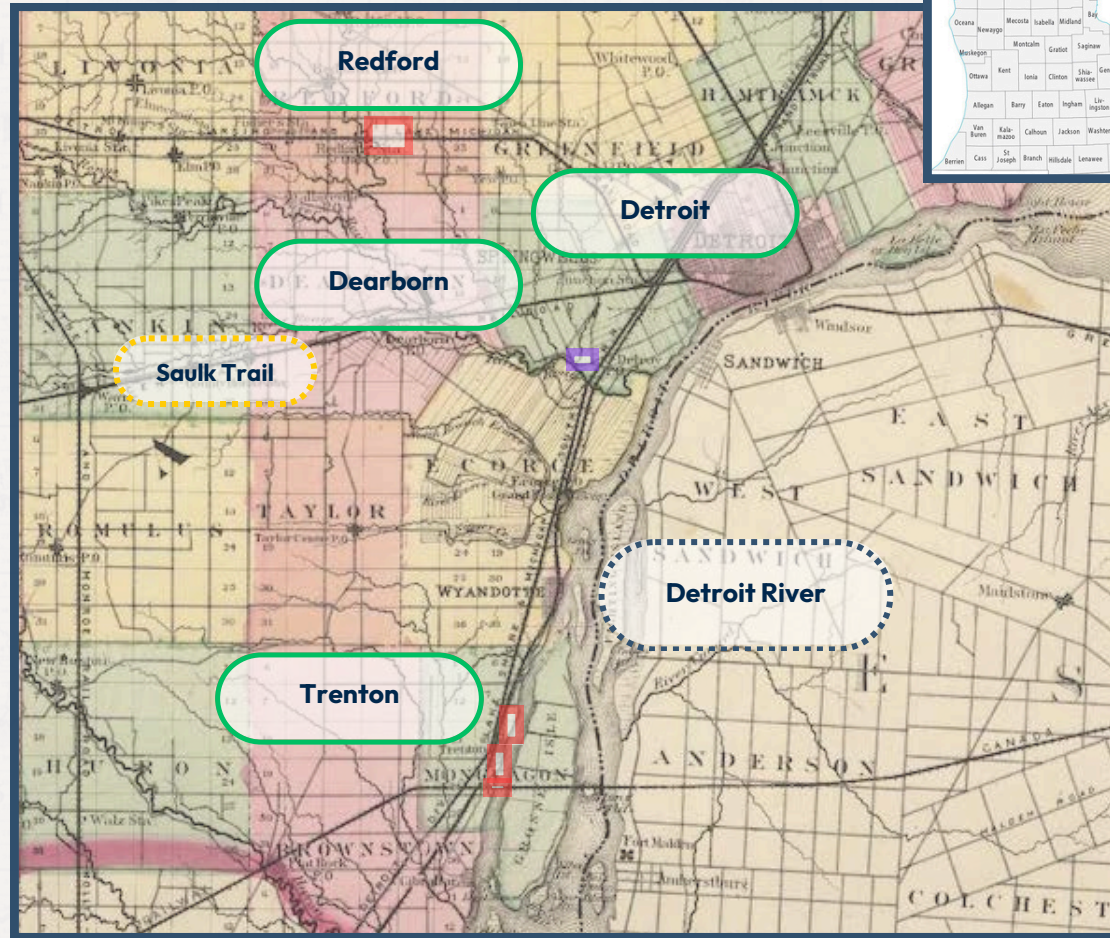


Image from: H. F. Walling, *Atlas of the State of Michigan* (Detroit, MI: R.M. & S.T. Tackabury, 1873). <https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/s/f1v866>.

Muskegon County

Land Parcels: 1

Acres: 557.25

U-M's sole landholding in Muskegon County occupied a very advantageous position, forming the basis of the present-day city of Muskegon.

Euro-American settlement in this region began in 1837 when settlers began to harvest **timber** from lands surrounding Muskegon Lake. U-M claimed its parcel that same year, allowing the institution to benefit from expanding settlement and resource extraction in the region.

Muskegon is the homeland of the Odawa people. The area was ceded to the United States through the 1836 Treaty of Washington.

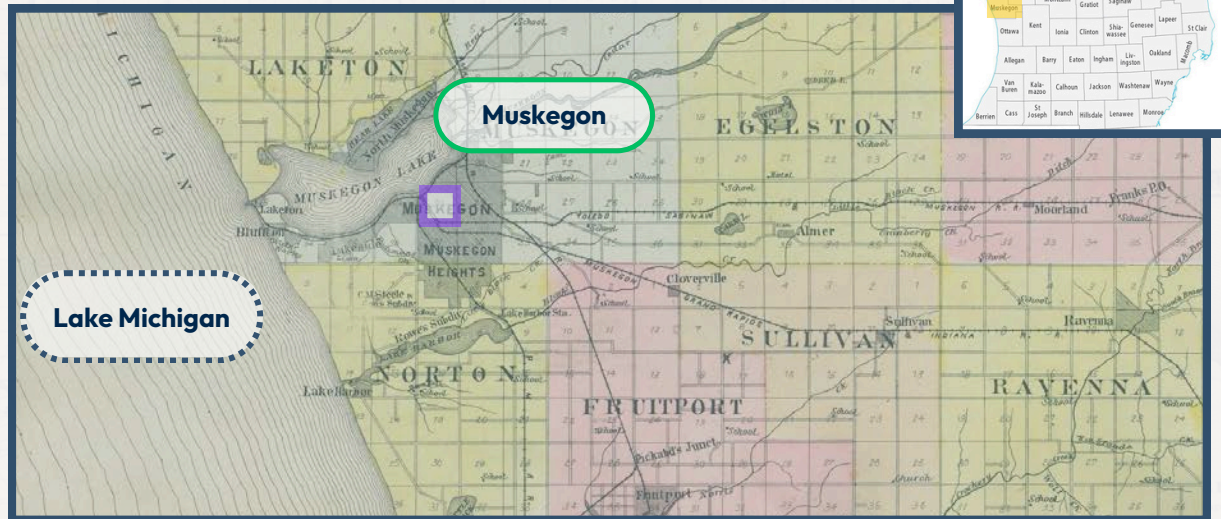


Image from: Geo. A. Ogle & Co, *Standard Atlas of Muskegon County, Michigan*, (Chicago: Geo. A. Ogle & Co, 1900). University of Michigan Digital Collections. <https://name.umdl.umich.edu/3927917.0001.001>.

Ottawa County

Land Parcels: 1

Acreage: 567.81 acres

U-M's acreage in what is now Allendale Charter Township, in Ottawa County, sat near a **trading post** established by agents of John Jacob Astor's **American Fur Company** in 1810. Located along the Grand River, the land offered easy transportation access to settlers, who could bring agricultural products to the nearby port of Grand Haven.

Ottawa County is the homeland of the Bodéwadmi and Odawa people, who lived in villages along the Grand River and the shores of Lake Michigan. The area was ceded to the United States through the 1821 Treaty of Chicago, but remained sparsely settled until the 1830s.

Grand Haven emerged as a settlement in 1833, and U-M claimed its parcel in 1837.

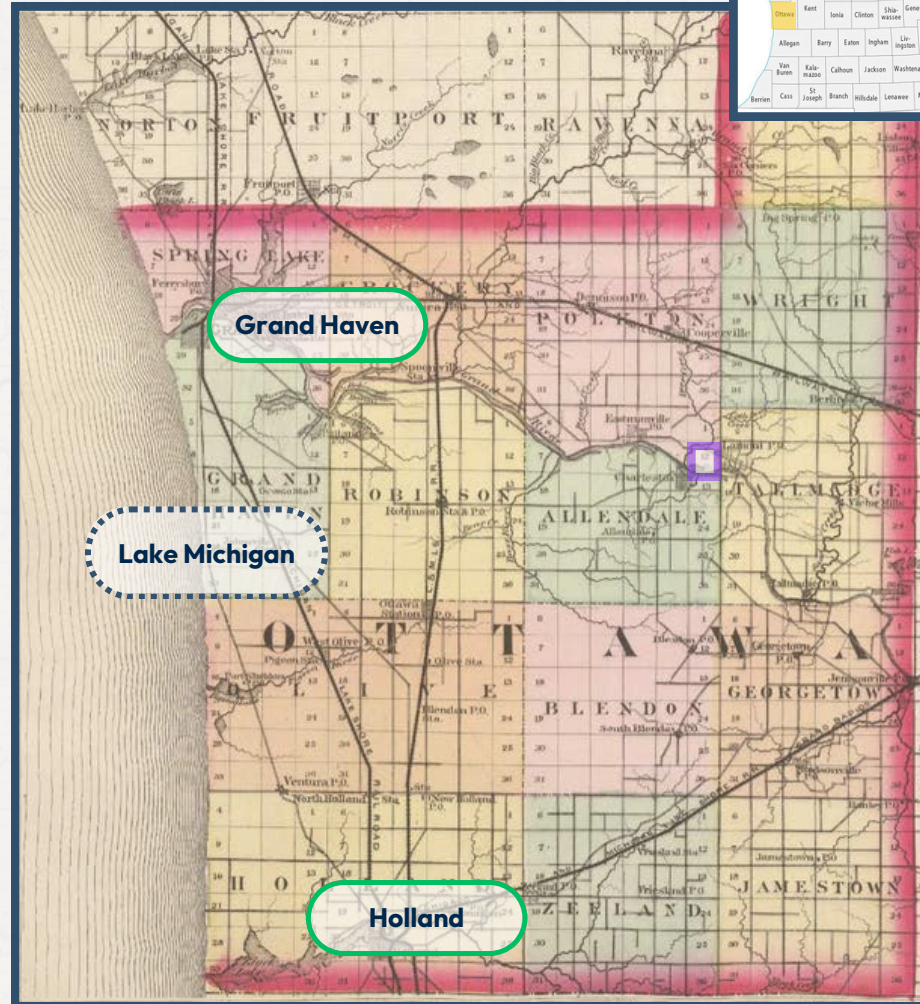


Image from: H. F. Walling, *Atlas of the State of Michigan* (Detroit, MI: R.M. & S.T. Tackabury, 1873). <https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/s/208s2d>.

Branch County

Land Parcels: 6

Acres: 3,860.44 acres

U-M held four complete sections east of present-day Coldwater, which was established by settlers from New England in 1830. U-M acquired an additional 1280 acres in northern Branch County that same year. The town of Coldwater and U-M's tracts sat near the **"Saulk Trail,"** a Native American pathway that settlers widened, expanded, and renamed the Chicago Road in 1835.

Located roughly midway across Michigan's Lower Peninsula, Branch County's settlement in the 1830s reflected the shifting patterns of American expansion. Previously concentrated around Detroit, settlement had now reached the territory's interior.

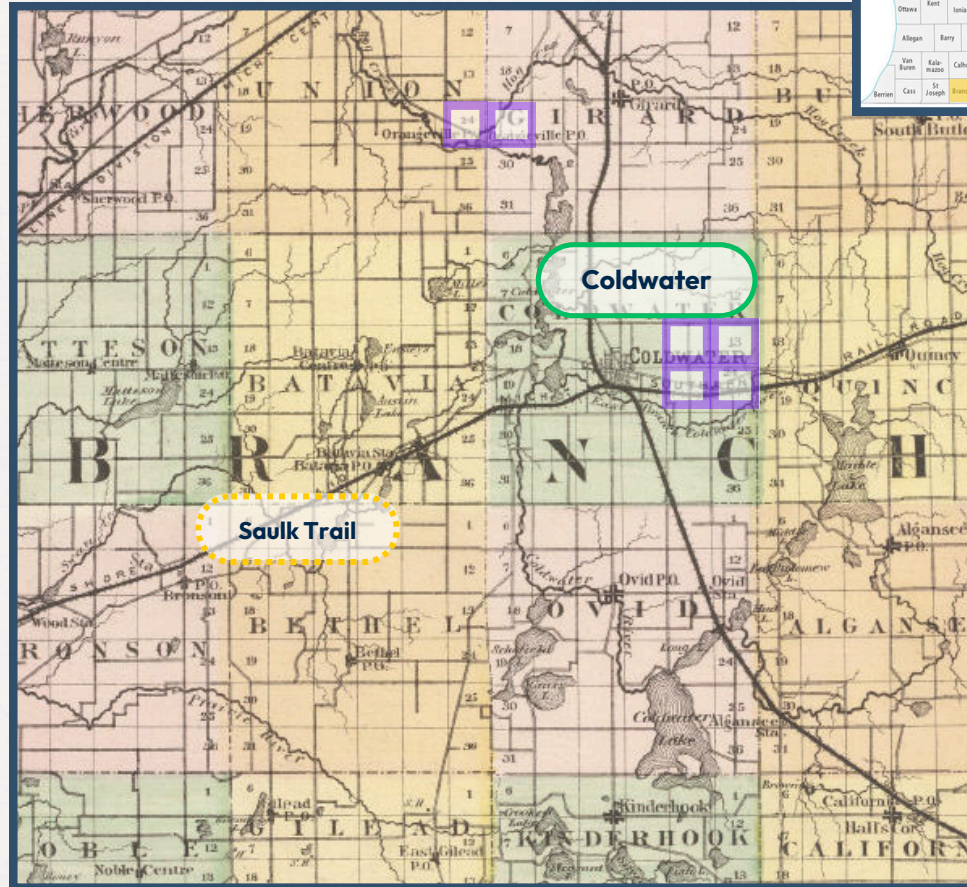


Image from: H. F. Walling, *Atlas of the State of Michigan* (Detroit, MI: R.M. & S.T. Tackabury, 1873). <https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/s/8ezsg9>.

Calhoun County

Land Parcels: 7

Acres: 4,376.61

U-M's landholdings in Calhoun County centered on Marshall, a settlement established in 1830. In 1833, U-M secured title to tracts near Marshall, Battle Creek, and the southern portion of the county. Because Marshall was considered a **potential** choice for Michigan's **state capital**, U-M's Trustees sought to capitalize on the potential development boon in the area.

U-M also held a full 640 acre section in Battle Creek, a settlement whose name refers to a battle between Bodéwadmi people and U.S. military forces that took place in 1824.

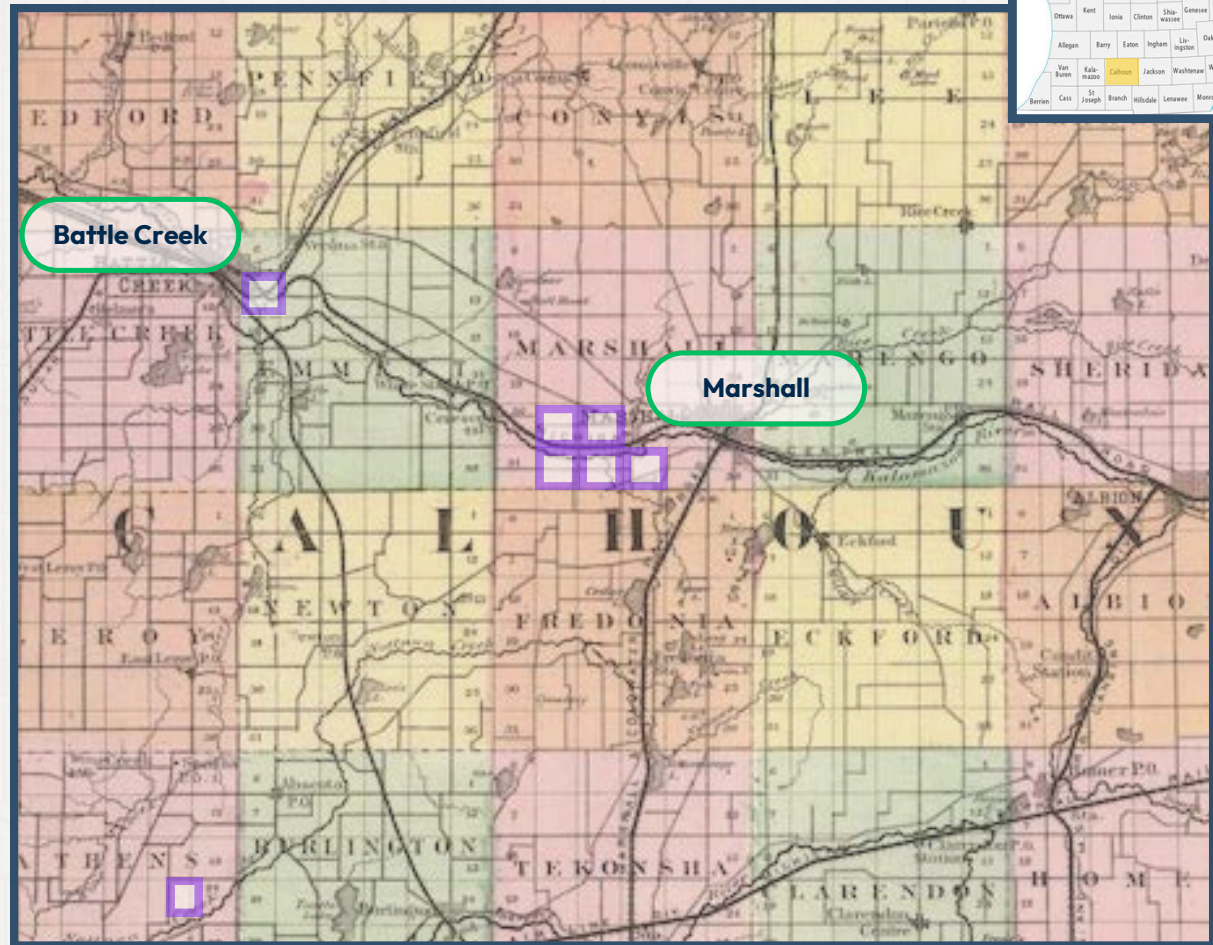


Image from: H. F. Walling, *Atlas of the State of Michigan* (Detroit, MI: R.M. & S.T. Tackabury, 1873). <https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/s/25m2tw>.

Kent County

Land Parcels: 9

Acreage: 3,382.42 acres

U-M's landholdings in Kent County were widely dispersed. Four parcels surrounded present-day Grand Rapids, Michigan, which was incorporated as a village in 1838. Several other parcels sat along the **Grand River Trail**, an Indigenous path connecting the area to Detroit, as well as along the Grand River.

The Grand Rapids area is the homeland of the Odawa, who maintained several villages along the Grand River. Two major treaties displaced the Odawa, leading to increased American settlement. The first treaty, the **1821 Treaty of Chicago**, ceded land south of the Grand River to the United States. The **1836 Treaty of Washington** ceded land north of the river.

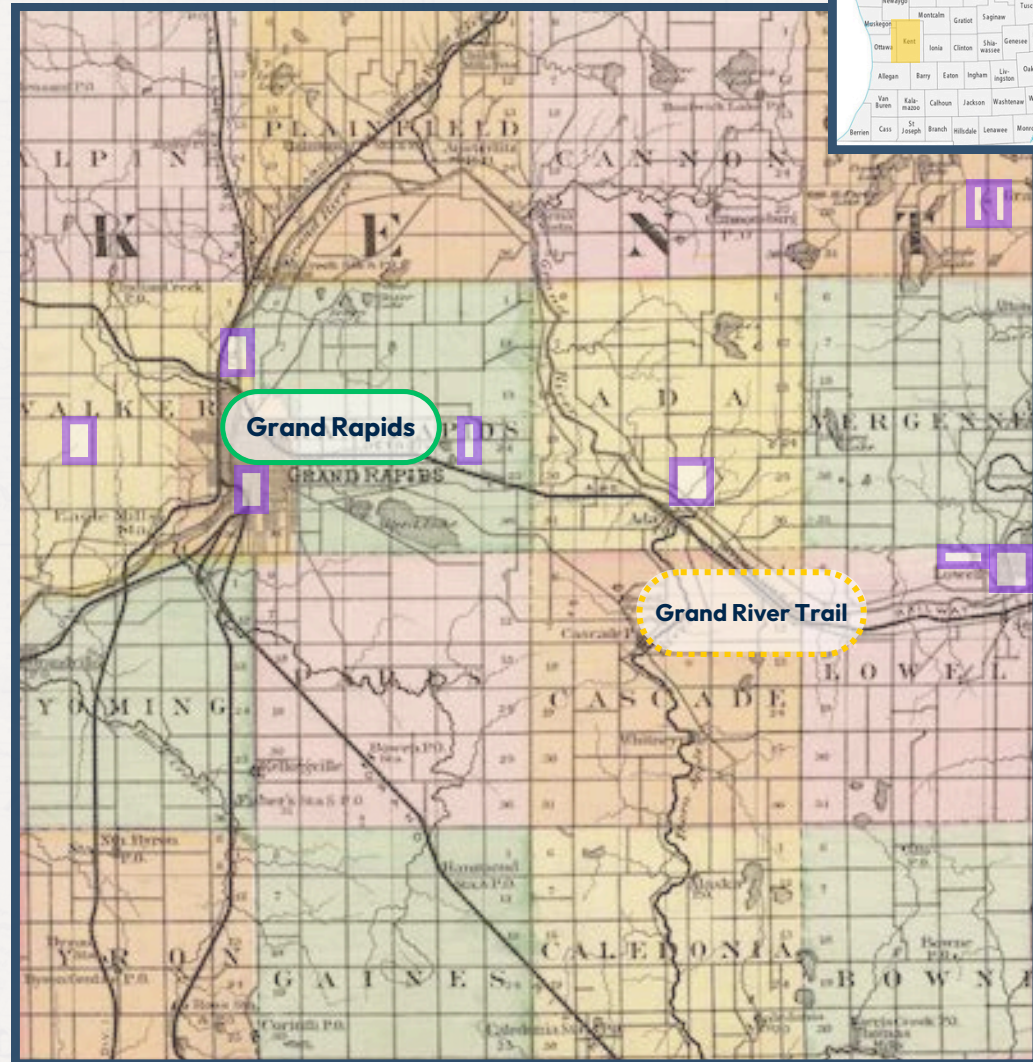


Image from: H. F. Walling, *Atlas of the State of Michigan* (Detroit, MI: R.M. & S.T. Tackabury, 1873). <https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/s/001zjq>.

Lucas County (Ohio)

Land Parcels: 6

Acreeage: 916.6 acres

U-M also briefly held land in Lucas County, Ohio, near present-day Toledo. On the Maumee River and close to the settlements of Perrysburg and Fort Meigs, Ohio, these lands were valuable because of their **river frontage** and proximity to settler populations. U-M's lands sat within the "Twelve Mile Square Reservation," a tract ceded to the United States by Indigenous communities during the **1795 Treaty of Greenville**.

This area is the traditional territory of the Odawa and Wyandotte people.

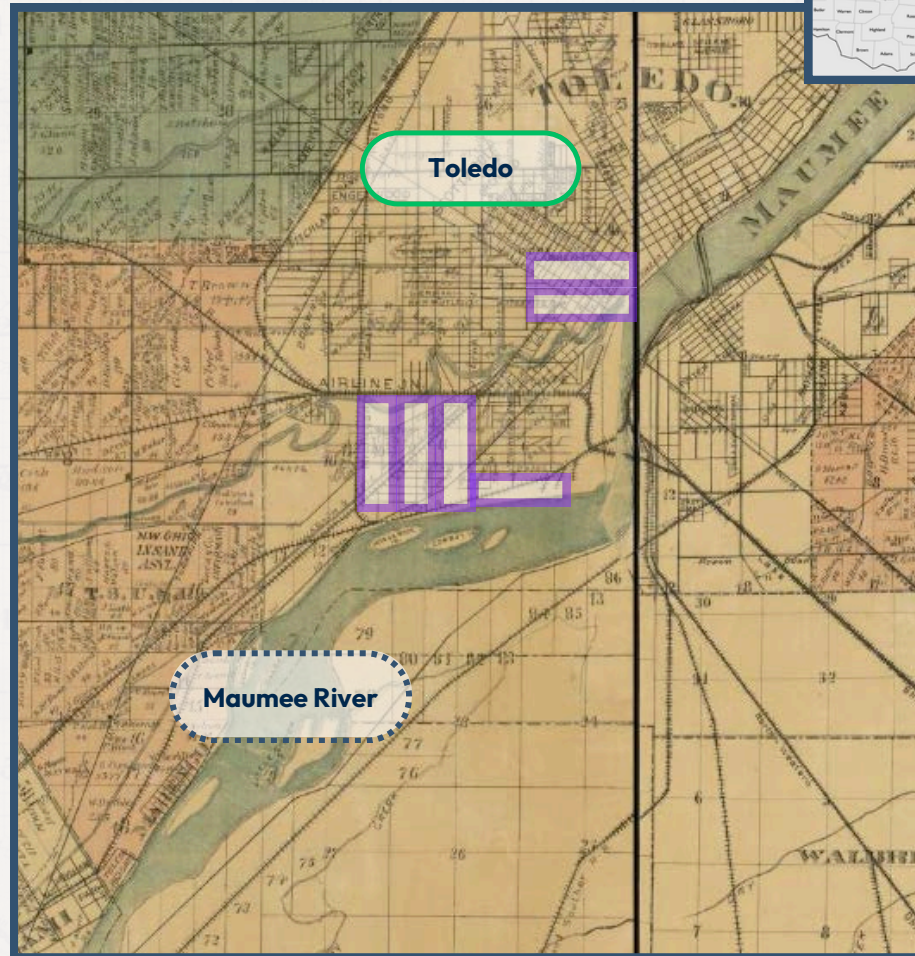


Image from: Locke & Trowbridge, "Map of Lucas and Parts of Wood, Ottawa and Sandusky Counties, Ohio," 1888, Library of Congress. <https://lccn.loc.gov/2012592372>.

Ann Arbor and Michigan Statehood



Jasper Francis Cropsey, U-M in Ann Arbor, 1855. One of the earliest paintings of U-M's main campus.

The sale of land acquired by the university through the Treaty of Fort Meigs and federal land grants continued during the late 1830s, a pivotal moment for both the institution and the Territory of Michigan. In 1837, the university began its move from Detroit to Ann Arbor, where it emerged as one of the Midwest's prominent universities and **a model** for institutions like Cornell University and the University of California system. That same year, Michigan shed its status as a territory, becoming the twenty-sixth state.

Since 1805, approximately 50,000 settlers flocked to Michigan, moving west across the Lower Peninsula to establish Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, St. Joseph, and other towns. Settler colonialism, the process through which Euro-American newcomers forcibly displaced Indigenous people and permanently occupied their lands, profoundly altered Michigan's landscape. U-M's development was intertwined with this process. The institution was not only a beneficiary of land acquisition but also a key element in state-building, offering the education essential for a functioning state and making the area attractive to settlers. Land acquisition through the Treaty of Fort Meigs and federal land grants made it all possible, providing the university with resources that could be converted into capital to help maintain and develop the institution.

Image from: Jasper Francis Cropsey, "The University of Michigan Campus, 1855," Jasper Francis Cropsey visual materials, 1855-1856, Bentley Historical Library.

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